

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Educational Policies Commission

National Education Association of the United States and
the American Association of School Administrators

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FOREWORD

This volume was developed for the consideration of the Educational Policies Commission by a special subcommittee including George D. Stoddard, *Chairman*, Prudence Cutright, and Maycie Southall.

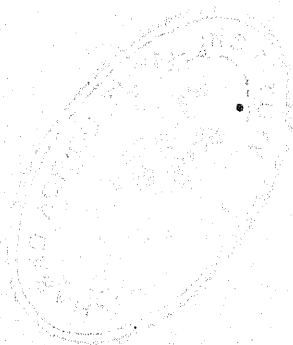
In addition to the members of the Commission particularly concerned with the extension of educational services to include young children, various persons were enlisted as consultants and assistants. In the former category N. S. Light of the Connecticut State Education Department, Helen K. Mackintosh of the United States Office of Education, and Frances Mayfarth, editor of *Childhood Education*, rendered invaluable aid.

The first drafts to be submitted to the Commission were prepared in the New York State Education Department under the direction of William E. Young. Subsequently various members of the staff of the Department assisted in revising the manuscript in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission, including Ruth Andrus, Frederick H. Bair, Helen Garrett, Helen Hay Heyl, Frederick J. Moffitt, and Ralph B. Spence.

This document was first authorized by the Commission at its meeting in March 1944. In September 1945 it was approved for publication with a clear statement that the Educational Policies Commission favors the extension of school services downward to at least the third or fourth year.

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Educational Services for Young Children

I. INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is concerned with the problem: What constitutes the best development and education for children from three through five years of age? It proposes that the educational services be extended downward and that these extended services be closely integrated with the rest of the program of public education.

The development of the individual

America is committed to the development of the individual. In fulfillment of this commitment, we have undertaken many large services. One of these is free public education for all the children of all the people.

Through education we seek to enable the individual to develop those abilities, understandings, and traits which he must have to attain self-realization. The contributions of the school in former days were made largely in terms of reading, writing, and numbers. The need of these abilities has magnified with our advancing technological society. To these contributions we have now added many others such as health and personal and social adjustment. It is also quite essential that the individual master the disciplines of the society in which he lives and grows.

The disciplines of democracy

Democratic culture has disciplines quite as powerful, although not so overt and direct, as those of dictatorial society. The disciplines of democracy are those which are needed for (1) the full development of the individual and (2) the successful functioning of a democracy. Building these disciplines is a continuous process which should begin very early in life.

The disciplines of American society are masked to some extent under such common phrases as: *taking turns, being a good sport, playing the game, living up to what the family expects of you, not letting the other fellow down, having a sense of honor, being a good neighbor, considering what other people will think of you, and being a decent, law-abiding citizen.* Whether masked or not, the disciplines are ever operating as powerful forces in regulating individual participation and in ensuring democracy as a going concern.

Some of these disciplines have found partial expression in the law, but the greater number of them have not. They are rather self-disciplines which have originated in the mores and are maintained and nourished by popular acceptance. The initiation, growth, and development of democratic disciplines constitute an essential part of education. They include:

Respect for others

Respect for others has self-respect as its cornerstone. It requires that we make a positive effort to recognize and appreciate the position and worth of others. Such recognition involves acceptance and appreciation that growth is individual. It cannot be forced into a groove. We assume our share of the responsibility for furthering the optimum development of the individual.

Cooperative effort

We should give as well as take, help others as well as ask for help, share and think things out together in order that the group may gain ends that serve all the members. The act of cooperation recognizes that we live and work as groups as well as individuals. It requires a control over self-assertive impulses. Cooperation is dependent on the development of skills as well as of attitudes.

Appreciation of deferred values

The democratic citizen is interested in tomorrow as well as today. He is ready to strive for a good, more remote than immediate, personal benefit. He provides for posterity.

Fair play

Fair play calls for abiding by the rules of the game, which must be known and accepted by all the participants. It refuses to take advantage of others because of ignorance, inferior position, or other handicap from which they may suffer. It means sticking to an agreement made in good faith by all parties, such as submitting to the decisions of a referee.

The discipline of science and rational thinking

The scientific attitude calls for an understanding of the laws that describe how nature works, a willingness to be guided by them, and an abandonment of prejudice and superstition.

Self-reliance

We should not allow ourselves infantile reactions and excuses for failures as we approach mature phases of social living. The individual in a democratic society has to act. He should weigh matters carefully, but he must at the appropriate time take a stand.

Individual freedom and responsibility

The individual in a democracy is free to think, read, listen, speak, and write; he is free to worship God in his own way. He is free to choose. It is his responsibility to cherish these freedoms for others as well as for himself. He should not use them to undermine the supporting structure. It is his responsibility to strengthen a society of free men.

Education as comprehensive and continuous

To nurture these disciplines as a function of education is not a new conception. The idea stems back to the early founders of the republic. It has likewise become increasingly clear that the teaching of good citizenship cannot be restricted within any period of schooling—elementary, secondary, or higher. Nor does the development of such aspects of citizenship as health, personal and social adjustment, and the expressive and communicative arts wait upon compulsory school age or cease at its ending. Education is concerned with the enhancement

of the individual at all ages and with developing the abilities, understandings, and traits which he needs as a happy and contributing member of our society.

Children, the basic human resource

Children are the basic human resource, important in themselves as personalities and important as a prospectus of what society will become. What children experience during their early years strongly affects their value to themselves and to society. The growth process during the first six years is foundational and tends to set the pattern of future health and adjustment. Healthy, well-adjusted persons are the product of an orderly process of growth.

Play, work, and adventure for young children

From the young child's point of view, play is the most important element in his day and makes life worth living. So spontaneously creative are children that indoors and out, at all seasons, with other children or alone, the growing child will play. But his play can be thwarted by an unsympathetic adult, by ill health or undernourishment, or it can be arrested by the poverty of his environment. Fortunately, most adults "let" children play, especially children under six. If children are not given toys, they will play with rags, stones, sticks, clothespins, or anything else available. They impersonate, dramatize, reenact, and enlarge upon any information, however meager.

Yet play is not simply play; through it children are unconsciously learning to adapt to life and to take an active part in it. They dramatize human relations; they discover how to get along with others; they learn about themselves; they develop a control over inanimate objects. In play they set their own standards and measure themselves with their own yardsticks of success. Like ivy on a brick wall, they put out their own shoots and tentatively select their own directions of growth.

In order that play may be happy and fruitful, children need sunshine, fresh air, space, cleanliness, and materials which they can adapt to their own purposes. If a child is an integral part of his family and of the community in which he lives, his play will reflect growth and new horizons. As he grows, he will play for longer periods, in a more complicated setting, and with larger numbers of children contributing to his plans. He will learn to take turns and share things; above all, he will learn to exchange ideas. He will act his age in order to hold the respect of his playmates. He will make individual decisions and participate in those of his group. In his own small way, through taking care of himself and respecting others, he will be helping democracy to succeed.

Even during the years from three to six a child will have some experience in chores. There will be the putting away of playthings, the taking care of his own clothes, perhaps some brushing up of sand spilled or the filling in of a hole dug, the regular care of a well-loved pet, and the chance to help an older person now and then. In carrying out such little duties children learn respect for the work of other people, for the needs of animals, and for the conservation of valuable objects.

Adventure, as well as play and work, is a necessary part of a child's life, and time for it should be provided. A trip to the store, a walk around the block, watching the plumber repair a fixture, a word with the traffic policeman at the corner, an afternoon in the park—any one of these may constitute adventure. Such adventures will help children to become better acquainted with the world, to discover their own limitations and potentialities.

Play, work, and adventure of young children require oversight on the part of an adult. No child five or under can be expected to meet adequately all the contingencies of the environment or direct all the impulses that surge up within him. Herein lies an opportunity. Through sympathetic and understanding guidance, adults will find countless openings for interpreting the world to a child.

*What educational services for young children
will accomplish*

If we help children to understanding and skill in the communicative and expressive arts, we shall be furthering their individual development and in time enriching our total society. If we provide healthy daily living for each child, we shall in time have healthy adult citizens. This is readily understandable, but some of us may wonder how the democratic conceptions of man's responsibility for himself and of consideration for the welfare of his fellow man can be made part of the experiences of young children. Just as the diet of a child may contain the same basic life-giving food elements as the more varied and highly-seasoned food of an adult, so the play and work of the child during these early years can include the basic elements of good social life: companionship, sharing, and goodwill. In the young child's world there can be the prototypes of all desirable living.

Many homes in and of themselves are capable of providing their young children (three to six years of age) with experiences in democratic living and backgrounds that will give them a good start in life. Children in such homes will have good food, sufficient rest, companionship, a place to play, and adaptable play materials which will provide an opportunity for them to grow mentally, physically, and emotionally. There are other children in every section of our country, in every social and economic group, in rural, village and urban homes alike, whose parents are not able by circumstance, nature or training to give them the values inherent in a carefully directed program. Lonely children, pampered children, browbeaten children, undernourished children, children growing up in densely populated neighborhoods, children of working or overfatigued mothers, children of ignorant parents, and children of parents in poor health—all these children may suffer inexcusably.

Educational services for young children constitute a recognition that our democratic society intends that all children shall have opportunity for essential growth.

II. PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The first five or six years of a child's life are the most important that he will ever experience, important and vital because they are *first*.

"The chief problems in this age period are health care (vaccination, immunization, etc.) ; protection, especially from accidents; nutrition; and mental hygiene, providing love, affection, and security."¹ The financial burdens and losses resulting from injury, ill-health, malnutrition and maladjustment are staggering. To provide the best possible health, care and education for every young child is obviously a good economic policy.

This would be true for any society. Moreover, in a democratic culture there is the conception of the value of human personality. The worth put on individual man requires that he shall have a fair start, a fair chance to make a social contribution and to achieve self-realization.²

Different programs necessary

There are probably more than 14,000,000 children under six years of age in the United States. The Bureau of Census reports that births exceeded the 3,000,000 mark in 1943 for the first time in the history of the country. According to the 1940 census figures, 57 percent of our population live in urban areas, and 43 percent, including farm and non-farm population, live in places under 2500. Yet, of the 14,000,000 children under six years of age, more than one-half are rural children. Twenty-eight states are more rural than urban, and even those most thickly populated have rural and sparsely settled areas.

These children vary in their national backgrounds. Although they are predominantly white, some of them represent other

¹ *Human Conservation: The Story of Our Wasted Resources*, National Resources Planning Board Bulletin, Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1943. p. 43.

² Educational Policies Commission. *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, Washington, D. C.: The Commission, 1938. p. 50-71.

racial strains, Negro, American Indian, and Asiatic. Some are born into homes of affluence; others into homes of reasonable comforts; and yet others, into homes of poverty and want. Some are members of families where influences of education, art and religion abound; others dwell where the cultural plane is relatively low. Some are born into healthy surroundings; others, into a social heritage of disease and distress. Some have brothers and sisters; others are "only" children. Some are members of households where love and affection prevail; others live amidst discord, and even in broken homes. Some are given companionship and security; others may be "unwanted" and neglected. Yet all in all these 14,000,000 youngsters are America's greatest resource, and each one of them is precious.

Density of the population, industrial conditions, housing, the number of working women and the type of work which they do, will all affect the nature of the educational services that are carried on. These factors vary not only from place to place but also from time to time. It is evident that no one stereotyped program can meet the needs of all these different children and situations.

Child accounting

The basic data for each child such as name, address, age, sex, national origin, racial background, names and occupations of parents, are essential for all community agencies engaged in programs of child care and development. The public school has for years taken the lead in child accounting. It is the only agency that has anything approaching a continuing census of children. Where the public school has neglected its child accounting, the community is generally without the needed records.

The public school has to acquire these data even when it restricts its services to children over five or six, for the school has to plan appropriately for its new entries and the constant changes in pupil population. Here then is an excellent avenue of service where the public school can supply the basic infor-

mation for all community programs of child protection and education.

Some schools through their child accounting bureaus are doing more than supplying factual items. These schools have become a coordinating agency for community programs of child care. Such a school furnishes other community agencies with the basic child accounting data. Each such agency reports its program to the school, and the latter keeps a record of what each community agency is doing to help each child.

Not every school system in this country has or even attempts to have an inventory of the children its schools are supposed to serve. There are sparsely settled mountain areas in both the East and West where the children are neglected and even their names do not appear in the school records. There are areas in the Deep South where the schools do not know how many children—either white or black—live in their districts. Obviously, one of the first steps for the school authorities to take is to establish adequate child accounting. Where the schools have obtained the necessary basic data, it has been relatively easy for the community to inaugurate helpful services, and the schools have been able to contribute to the work of health and welfare agencies and to help provide a coordinated approach through pooled resources.

Health services for infants and young children

All the states, generally as a part of the state health department, have bureaus of maternal, infant and child hygiene. The aims of these services have been described for one state as "to improve the care of mothers before and after childbirth, to reduce the infant mortality, and to give children continuously good health supervision both during the preschool period and during the school-age period."¹

Regular clinics are held for mothers where advice is given on the prenatal and postnatal care of babies. There are well-

¹ Washburne, Carleton. *Louisiana Looks at Its Schools*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana Educational Survey Commission, 1942. p. 62.

child clinics where matters of health and nutrition are considered. Children are given medical examinations and are immunized from diphtheria, smallpox and other contagious diseases. A dental hygienist examines their teeth and provides prophylactic services.

Supervised play groups

Play is a major educative force in the lives of young children. Some public schools have been bringing together children of two to six years of age for the purpose of supervised play. These children assemble in groups at regular intervals once, twice, or three times a week under the guidance of a qualified nursery school teacher. If mothers are trained, and each mother takes her turn as leader of a group of children, a trained professional worker in nursery education can supervise a number of such play groups. This last arrangement has been found economical, and it promotes valuable experience for the mothers.

The children have the advantages of both individual and group play. The public schools provide trained guidance and an appropriate environment with space, equipment, and healthful surroundings. The parents enjoy the advantages of participation and observe how their child works and plays with his peers, what he regards as satisfactions and as obstacles, and what progress he is making in the use of language, materials, and equipment.

The young people of the secondary school, especially students in the social studies and homemaking, also have opportunities for observation and participation. The purpose is not so much to educate them for parenthood as to add to their understanding of home and community relationships.

These play groups generally meet in the public schools or on adjoining playgrounds, but frequently they meet at other appropriate centers. As these services are extended to rural areas, a farm home will be at times the most convenient place.

The important aspect is that the public school is recognizing its concern and responsibility, and is furnishing professional guidance.

Nursery schools

Nursery schools represent an extension of educational services to include children too young for the customary reading program of grade one. The ages of the children in attendance at nursery schools range from two to five or even six. Some school systems are, however, organizing their nursery schools primarily to serve three- and four-year-olds. Children of two years are included in informal play groups meeting once a week or oftener. The kindergarten is provided for the five-year-olds, and the six-year-old is enrolled in grade one.

The nursery school is a medium by which many communities are helping to insure good medical, physical, and nutritional care for young children. The nursery school provides a good environment for work, play, and adventure. The nursery school makes provision for proper rest, diet, and other health routines. The nursery school works with and through the home, providing parent education as an integral part of the program. The nursery school may consist of a full day session from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon (quite commonly during the war it began earlier than nine and closed later than three), or it may comprise only a morning or afternoon session. The nursery school may be in session five or six days a week.

Among the first nursery schools (as distinguished from day nurseries) in America were those established by the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station (in 1921), Teachers College, Columbia University (in 1921), and the Yale Psycho-Clinic (in 1926). The number of nursery schools had reached 262 by 1930. The depression of the thirties created emergency situations in the care and guidance of young children. Federally subsidized programs of child health, school lunches, and nursery schools mitigated the dangers and evils in many localities. The federal

funds for the nursery schools were processed first through the Federal Emergency Relief Authority, then through the Works Progress Administration, and finally through the Federal Works Administration. These federally subsidized nursery schools numbered 1650 in 1936; and perhaps as many as 50,000 young children (usually those of two, three, and four years) from under-privileged homes were receiving care, protection, and education. In 1936 there were also 285 nursery schools privately operated largely for a wealthy clientele.

The second World War similarly intensified problems of child care and development, although the difficulties of that period differed in cause from those of the depression. The latter grew out of neglect of children occasioned by the unemployment and financial insecurity of parents. The problems during the war could be traced partly to the employment of parents outside the home, in the armed forces, in war industries or civilian services. The federal government through the Lanham Act and the legislatures of various states (such as California, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington) appropriated moneys for wartime nursery schools (in most cases operated by local public education authorities). On March 31, 1945, there were more than 2000 Lanham nursery schools¹ with an enrollment of some 70,000 preschool children. There are hundreds of other publicly-supported nursery schools and an additional 1000 private nursery schools. More young children today than ever before enjoy the advantages of nursery school education.

Kindergartens

The kindergarten in public schools is generally for five-year-olds, but many school systems today are developing two-year kindergarten programs and enroll children at the age of four.

The public school kindergarten has a much older history in this country than the public nursery school and has been much

¹ 1481 nursery school units with 51,299 children; 819 centers for school-age children with an enrollment of 31,870; and 556 combined units with 18,150 preschool and 9,943 school-age children. *N. Y. Times*, June 8, 1945, p. 16

more widely accepted. The first public school kindergarten is generally accredited to St. Louis in 1870 although the American kindergarten movement became active in Boston ten years earlier. The public school kindergarten enrollment approached 725,000 in 1930. Although administrative retrenchment in school services during the depression years and also a decreasing birth rate were reflected in a decline in enrollment during the decade ending in 1940, it is likely that the reversal of these factors during 1940-1945 has resulted in the largest kindergarten enrollment at the present time in the history of the kindergarten. Probably 25 percent of the five-year-olds have the services of a kindergarten.

The percentage is larger in urban than in rural areas. The consolidation of schools in rural areas, however, is making possible the enrichment of the rural school program. Improved roads and methods of transportation are reducing distances. The rural school has in many instances shown a keen and realistic appreciation of the place of the school as a community or neighborhood center. Some of the most modern and successful kindergartens are in central rural schools. Even in one-teacher and two-teacher schools there is in some instances a growing awareness of the needs of the four- and five-year-old, and he is no longer subjected to the regimen of the first grade.

The kindergarten program is not prescribed nor rigidly set. There are no required subjects in the generally understood sense. The program of the modern kindergarten resembles very much that of the nursery school with appropriate adaptations to the increased maturity of individual children. In fact, the nursery school and kindergarten can and should be considered as comprising a sequential preschool unit.

The kindergarten—like the nursery school—emphasizes health, work, play, security, adventure, friendship, and love. From the days of its earliest introduction, the kindergarten has made much use of music, singing, rhythms, and dramatizing. The work and play are both individual and group, both indoors and out.

The kindergarten has not done directly so much in the matter of nutrition as has the nursery school. Many of the kindergartens have been organized on a half-day basis. The half-day session was originally conceived in certain systems to enable the teacher to spend the afternoon in visiting and conferring with the parents. During days of economic retrenchment, it was found that the same teacher could do double duty—that is, serve twice the number of children—if the kindergarten session were limited to a half day for any one child. Half the children came in the morning; and the other half, in the afternoon. Therefore, it has not been so necessary for the kindergarten to provide hot lunches or dinner for the children. The kindergarten today is rapidly tending toward a full day's program (nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, five days a week).

The kindergarten's main function is to help parents in the care and development of children and, like the nursery school, it has functioned as a center for parent education. This emphasis on close relationship with the home was with the kindergarten from its inception. Although, at times, this integral phase of the kindergarten program has been neglected, it invariably comes back, for it is essential to the attainment of the objectives of early childhood education. Today, where kindergartens exist, parents generally are better acquainted with the kindergarten program than with that of any other school level except in those school systems which have nursery schools.

Parent education

Much of the desirable relationship between home and school arises in their mutual concern for helping children grow and develop, but often the parents need assistance and direction. Many of the public school services, such as supervised play groups, nursery schools, and kindergartens described thus far, comprise in themselves programs for parent education. Providing opportunities for observation and participation in these activities constitutes a large part of such education.

Certain school systems make further provision for parent education groups. Parents are acquainted with the special child services afforded locally. The parent groups serve as study and discussion centers for matters of child development. A fundamental purpose is to aid parents in integrating all helpful factors to advance home and family life. Most school systems are realizing that if this work is to have maximum effectiveness, a professional worker in parent education should be provided. Because the parent education program is essentially a matter of attitudes and relationships, it requires skilled and competent leadership.

Family consultation centers

Family consultation centers can be considered a specialized type of parent education. The guidance and counseling services of public schools have been extended to include the parents of young children. Whether to enroll the child in nursery school or kindergarten, what immunization should be provided before school entrance, matters of nutrition and rest are typical problems which parents bring to such centers. Here again, guidance nurseries, health clinics, play groups for observation by parents, and workshops and study-discussion groups for their direct participation, all contribute to the work of the family consultation centers. In these centers the assistance of specialists in homemaking, health, mental hygiene, dentistry, and nutrition may be coordinated.

Special services for rural areas

As has been indicated in the previous discussion of public school services for young children and their parents, special adaptations have had to be made in rural areas. Some of the most effective kindergartens and parent education programs, however, are found in rural schools.

In some sparsely settled rural sections, an itinerant service on a county, township, or regional basis has been necessary so that mothers and children on farms may receive an acceptable

share of needed help. Where such services have been properly administered, they have been generally found to be both economical and worthwhile.

For more than thirty years the United States Department of Agriculture through itinerant workers has offered help to rural people in improving the arts of agriculture and home-making. It may be such experience as this that is suggesting to the public schools parallel services in child guidance and education.

III. NURSERY SCHOOLS AS A PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SERVICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The extension of educational services to include such programs as child accounting, well-baby and well-child clinics, supervised play groups, family consultation centers, parent education and others described in the previous chapter will have at first a varied degree of acceptance from community to community. Some localities will sponsor all, or nearly all, such services. All localities have some of these services. Every school, for example, is carrying on parent education of some sort, although the program may be unplanned, meager, and fragmentary. The problem is for the school to expand and enrich its concept and program of parent education.

The educational services for young children interlock and complement one another. Certainly a school with kindergartens and nursery schools will readily see the need of more adequate child accounting and supervised play groups. Nursery schools and kindergartens provide leads and opportunities—as well as disclose needs more sharply—for family consultation centers and parent education. Adequate child accounting will indicate for many localities and rural areas the importance of nursery schools, kindergartens, and related services. The nursery schools and kindergartens are extensions which the supervised play group for young children will suggest. The well-baby and well-child clinic raises the question of how a daily program of guided supervision can be established to carry out the program indicated by the clinic. Parent education groups engaged in the study of young children frequently give impetus and direction to the establishment of kindergartens, nursery schools, and child-care services under private or public auspices.

Rather than attempt to outline a separate program and structure for each one of these present educational services to

show in detail how it would fit into the public school organization, it may suffice to select for detailed consideration, just the nursery school. This educational service can be considered the most comprehensive, since it comes closest to including or involving all the others. A school system *could* have a nursery school and not a kindergarten, but in practice a school system that recognizes the importance of the child at three or four is not going to neglect him completely at five. A good nursery school includes supervised play, child guidance, parent education, and family consultation service.

If one accepts the modern nursery school, he in effect accepts all the modern educational services for young children as described. On the other hand, he may view the kindergarten, or supervised play, or parent education as entirely practical, but be reluctant about an extension to include the nursery center. This chapter will outline the program and structure of the nursery school, and show how it and all its related services can be made a function of public education. For those school systems where there is the desire to inaugurate only kindergartens and only weekly play groups or other services less inclusive than nursery education, the principles outlined will have similar, though less extensive application.

Different administrative plans needed

No hard-and-fast pattern of nursery school organization can be described which will fit every local situation. Probably in most cases the nursery school center will be housed within the elementary-school building. Some communities prefer to house a nursery unit within junior high school or senior high school buildings. Others have suggested a new educational unit of six years, including children from three through eight years of age, and designated as early childhood education. In certain neighborhoods, particularly in certain federal or other housing projects, it may prove advisable to locate the nursery and kindergarten center right on the project. The important principle of administrative policy is to keep the arrangements sufficiently

flexible to meet local needs and to make best use of available facilities in any community.

The nursery school within an elementary school

The nursery school within an elementary school suggests itself from the experience of the kindergarten as the most advisable arrangement. The experience of the kindergarten also shows that a "standoffish" attitude on the part of a new unit can retard progress toward coordination. The regular grades of the elementary school need, in turn, to accept the nursery school as they have accepted the kindergarten as an integral part of the education for young children.

Where the elementary school has already included the kindergarten, its further inclusion of three-year-old and four-year-old children should not be viewed as a radical innovation. Some elementary schools have organized kindergartens for four- as well as five-year-olds and, in such schools, only one more year's work would be involved for three-year-olds. Still other elementary schools maintained wartime nursery schools for two-, three-, and four-year-old children of working mothers. This experience will be an advantage where nursery schools continue to include the two-year-olds. Here again, this question is one for the local people to decide.

It is suggested here, however, that the age of entrance into the regular nursery school be placed at three. There should be provided, as previously recommended, play guidance centers once a week for two-year-olds, as well as for three- and four-year-olds who do not enroll in the regular nursery classes. Public elementary schools that operated wartime nursery schools should not anticipate under the recommended new program any lightening of their duties now that the war is over, even if two-year-olds are not then admitted to the regular nursery school. In this postwar era the public elementary school should be open to all three- and four-year-olds, and not merely to those whose mothers are working.

Unfortunately there are too many elementary schools that have had no direct experience in either nursery or kindergarten education. These schools may want to establish a suitable program for five-year-olds before trying to meet the needs of children of three and four. Each local approach should be timed or graduated as community conditions warrant but always with the realization that education neglected today cannot be made up tomorrow. The development of the young children in presentday America cannot be postponed until 1950 or 1960 no matter how convenient such a postponement might be.

The rooms for the nursery school should be vastly different from the old-style classroom with its fixed desks and chairs, with blackboards front, right, and rear, and with the teacher's platform in front. But the room for the nursery class does not differ so much from a good-sized modern elementary classroom and differs very little from the standards of an up-to-date kindergarten. As elementary buildings are erected, it will be necessary to plan more large rooms adapted to the education of young children. These rooms provide for a greater diversification of activity and are more nearly self-contained with their own lavatories, toilets, and outside entrance.

Many of the older elementary buildings have vacant space. Some of these structures were designed to include upper grades which are now incorporated into junior high units. Some were planned and built to meet the requirements of a rapidly increasing child population which has not yet taken place. Suburban development has emptied many classrooms in large cities. Many such older buildings can be remodeled to include usable, if not fully satisfactory, facilities for the education of young children.

This matter of housing and physical facilities will be considered further on in this same chapter. The important aspect to be noted here is that the administrative planning for young children should do much to socialize the whole program in elementary education. The influence of the kindergarten has been

noteworthy in this respect. The inclusion of young children in increasing numbers in elementary schools should help all administrators to look beyond a paper, pencil, and crayon environment to embrace a more nearly complete environment for learning and living. Adequate play space, appropriate toilet and sanitary facilities, the health unit, and the cafeteria are basic to any elementary school, and they can serve children of all ages.

The nursery school and secondary school

Boys and girls of junior high school age (twelve, thirteen, and fourteen) are much interested in the care and development of very young children. By observing and assisting periodically in the preschool groups or in families having preschool children, the pupils in homemaking classes in the junior high school will find excellent opportunity to increase their understanding of home management, of their own family relations and of their younger brothers and sisters. Similar advantages are afforded the senior high school homemaking and social studies classes. All forms of preschool education sponsored by the public schools, whether in the form of small neighborhood groups for rural children, play groups serving as observation opportunities for parent-study discussion classes, or nursery schools, afford valuable experiences for boys and girls of later elementary as well as junior and senior high school ages.

For example, the upper-grade children in a biology course at Skokie School, Winnetka, work with and help the nursery school children. As they observe the habit formation and training of the three-year-old child, they consider his problems in the light of their own experience. In the biology classes, case studies which have been written by the nursery school staff are discussed. They deal with such matters as temper tantrums, shyness, crying for attention, sex interests, and antisocial behavior. These seventh- and eighth-grade pupils work out possible ways in which a given situation might best be handled.

They check their solutions against the action taken by the nursery school staff.¹

The enthusiasm of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds in their work with little children is noteworthy. Their interest carries over into situations in their own family and neighborhood. Work with young children helps them become more objective. They soon recognize certain forms of behavior in themselves as childish and immature. The respect of the older pupils for pupils of all ages seems to grow.

For this reason some school administrators like to establish a nursery school in the junior or senior high building. There are further advantages. The kindergarten and even grades one and two, as well as the nursery school, should be located on the ground floor. In many of the old-type elementary school buildings, ground floor space is limited. If the nursery school is placed in a secondary school building, the ground floor in the elementary school building can be kept for the kindergarten and primary grades. The junior high or senior high building will frequently be a more modern building than an adjoining elementary structure. This means that the former is more likely to have a modern health unit, cafeteria, etc. The advantages of a close tie-up between the nursery school and the various other organizational levels should be carefully weighed in each community.

The nursery school as a part of a new administrative unit of early childhood education

Many educators would group the nursery-kindergarten-primary grades together as a single administrative unit. These grades include children from three years through eight years of age. Certainly these years and the school grades they represent—nursery school, kindergarten, and grades one, two, and three—have much in common. These are years when children need detailed guidance from parents and teachers. Most of their

¹ Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Toward a New Curriculum*. Washington, D. C.: the Department, 1944. p. 25.

learning has to come through firsthand experience. These young children have not fully learned to read, write, and use numbers or to adjust socially to group living.¹ Of course, one cannot rightly say that the eight-year-old cannot pursue independent study and that the nine-year-old can; and that an eight-year-old cannot develop and maintain democratic groups and that a nine-year-old can. Some children have made these intellectual and social adjustments at seven or eight; others, at least under the present arrangement, never make them. There seems little doubt that with new methods of teaching the 3 R's and of guiding social behavior, we could have children acquire these basic adaptations long before nine years. Yet the experience of homes and schools and the results of research in child growth indicate that social and intellectual development should not be forced. While we may rightly expect the very young child to show positive and steady progress in all foundational knowledge and skills, we should be careful in each area to suit the pace to his own rate of growth.

"All modern nursery schools and kindergartens provide an alternative of various types of activity; there is no sudden change in the physical condition of children from six to eight to justify the almost complete neglect of such a rhythm in the school program at these ages."²

The integration of the nursery school, kindergarten, and primary grades will require in some schools adjustments on the upper as well as the lower end. The upper primary grades will want to accept from the nursery school and kindergarten those aspects of the program which recognize the total growth needs of the child. Regardless of the specific administrative arrangement used to bring about the articulation of the various units, what should be uppermost is a plan of education to achieve the values of each age level and of each individual child.

¹ Morrison, Henry C. *The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931. p. 7.

² Caswell, H. L. *Education in the Elementary School*. New York: American Book Co., 1942. p. 108.

The separate nursery school

It must be realized that no matter how effective a pattern of articulation of the nursery school and kindergarten with the other units of public education is worked out, there will frequently be separate nursery schools both privately and publicly operated. It is estimated that there are in this country over one thousand private nursery schools at the present time. There are also nursery schools, some of which may be publicly operated, in connection with various housing projects.

The private nursery schools will probably continue to increase. Many of them maintain high standards, excellent facilities, and programs. They offer services which the public schools have postponed too long. Some of them are connected with teachers colleges, universities, research or clinical centers. They may be used as demonstration schools. These nursery schools have made and will make a large contribution to public education. Others of the private nursery schools are fly-by-night agencies, here today and gone tomorrow. They are money-making enterprises to exploit the predicament of mothers working in industries or mothers who are professional women in neighborhoods and localities where the public authorities have provided no help. The personnel in such day care centers (they cannot properly be termed *schools*) may be untrained. The quarters may be unsafe, unsanitary, and unhealthful. The program may represent the minimum of care. The whole enterprise may be characterized as opportunistic, charging all that the traffic will bear.

The public authorities should provide some supervision over private nursery schools to guarantee a minimum of protection to children and parents. This supervision should certainly relate to the observance of fire laws, sanitary regulations, occupancy and health standards. Requirements as to a trained personnel should be enforced. At least one state (New York) has required registration of private nursery schools since 1939. The results have been salutary. Undoubtedly some improvement in private nursery schools will result from the estab-

lishment of good public nursery schools. With such nursery school opportunities available, parents will not generally use private centers unless the latter offer services as good as, or better than, those which the public schools afford.

As for nursery schools maintained on federal, local, or private housing projects, they will in most instances be integrated with the public school system. This integration will not always mean their removal to a near-by public elementary school. For reasons of plant facilities and geographical availability there may be advantages in having the nursery school and also the kindergarten and the primary grades within the cluster of homes they serve. On the other hand, such nursery schools, when publicly operated, will be open to all children close by regardless of whether they live within the boundaries of any particular real estate development. Such nursery schools will be housed in buildings owned or leased by the local schoolboard. Their direct administration will usually be a responsibility of the principal of the elementary school that serves the same district.

Integration and acceptance

As has been pointed out, different localities will find different ways of uniting and coordinating the work of the nursery-kindergarten-elementary grades. Much of the integration has already been accomplished. We perceive easily the intimate relationship between the nursery school and kindergarten. Indeed it would be hard to point out where the nursery school leaves off and the kindergarten begins. The same is true of the kindergarten and the first grade. The problem is not so much one of integration as of acceptance. Wherever public schools have genuinely accepted the kindergarten, this integration has been assured.

The nursery school now is the new child in the family of public education. If it is wanted and accepted, it will win a place for itself and enhance the value of the other members. At first

it may seem a stranger, but after it has made its contribution felt, we in public education will gradually realize that our family circle was incomplete until it arrived.

Admission of children

All children of three and four years of age in cities, villages, and rural areas should be admitted to the public nursery schools, but their attendance is in no wise to be compulsory.

Physically handicapped children, particularly the hard of hearing, those with partial vision, and others recovering from the effects of infantile paralysis, usually benefit from attendance in preschool groups largely made up of children without physical handicaps. The handicapped child gains confidence and independence by experience with other children; he develops a better adjusted personality. However, children having a physical or mental handicap that requires special care or close supervision should not be enrolled, except on the advice of the family physician. Such conditions include diabetes, epilepsy, blindness, the paraplegias, mental deficiency, and chronic illness.

Each child should be required to have a complete physical examination before admission. A dated record, signed by the physician, of the findings and of immunization from diphtheria and smallpox should be kept on file.

Physical facilities

The exposure of the nursery school, if possible, should be to the south and east with plenty of light and air coming from windows sufficiently low for the children to look out. The nursery school like the kindergarten should be on the ground floor in quarters which are attractive, safe, clean, with space for work and play, eating and sleeping. There should be adjoining locker rooms, bathrooms, and kitchen facilities. A direct exit should lead to an outdoor enclosed play yard for building, climbing, digging, and running. Some part of this area should be shaded.

Nursery schools and kindergartens should, of course, never be housed in buildings not fully approved by the local health and fire departments for such use.

Program

In planning the program many and varied factors must be considered: the ages of the children, their interests and needs, the number and preparation of personnel, the place of the parents in the program, the hours during which the school is open, the weather, the arrangement of the rooms, the facilities and equipment, and the space involved. A well-trained personnel is essential. The details of a good daily program can be decided only in the light of the conditions in each situation.

Hours—In some instances, two and one-half to three-hour morning programs are acceptable. In general, a program from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, Monday through Friday, which includes midday meal and a nap at the school will give each child the greatest benefits. Some parents may want their children to attend less than the full weekly schedule. The schedule should be as flexible as possible to meet local and individual needs. Where mothers are working, the school hours may be adjusted to their working hours, provided that the needs of the child are properly met.

Grouping of children—Children of three to five years are changing rapidly. It is wise, where numbers permit, to plan separate groups for the ~~three-~~ to four-year-olds and for the four- to five-year-old children. The separation of children into groups for the greater part of the day will tend to reduce fatigue. Young children attain better motor coordination in small groups. They are interested in cooperative play in small groups. As a general procedure, the younger the children, the smaller should be the group. In grouping children, age is not, however, the only factor to be considered. Some children over four years of age are small and will do better with the younger group. Other children even before they reach four years of age are physically well developed. They know how to look after themselves. They want and need social activity with older children. Such children belong in the older age group. In short, individual differences and development should de-

termine the grouping. In general, there should be one teacher for every twelve to fifteen children in the three-year-old group and a teacher for every fifteen to eighteen children in the four-year-old group.

Everyday activities

The everyday activities of the nursery school should provide the child with health supervision, health practices, work-play indoors and out. In the nursery school as in the home, there are daily routines in the care of children such as those related to the bodily functions of eating, drinking, rest, and toileting. These routines present certain health risks as well as opportunities for the establishment of desirable practices. These and all the activities of the nursery school must be carried out in conformity with the requirements of good health.

There are three servings of food: the hot dinner at noon and the midmorning and midafternoon lunches. The last two generally consist of fruit juice and crackers or sandwiches and milk. The food is served at regular times at small, low tables with chairs of size appropriate to the different children. Five or so children and an adult are at each table. With only one teacher for almost fifteen children, additional adults will be called upon at mealtime. These adults may be staff workers, parents, college students in practice training, or high school students who are observing nursery school practices. The adults furnish guidance. The children should have opportunities to serve themselves.

"The requirements of the diet for children in nursery school and kindergarten are:

1. Such foods as can be easily digested and which contain the essential health-building elements.
2. Simple foods.
3. Food which is attractive and appetizing and which offers contrast in color, flavor, and texture."¹

¹ Andrus, Ruth. "Liberalizing the Program for PreSchool Children," Chapter II, 44th Yearbook, Part I, *Curriculum Reconstruction*. National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945. p. 25.

The maintenance of a well-balanced diet is a cooperative problem for home and school. Staff members and parents will need frequent conferences, and the weekly menu of the school should be sent in advance, as a routine procedure, to the parents. The home economics staff of the local secondary school can be a source of guidance in the selection and preparation of food. The experience of many highly successful nursery schools will provide leads for details of procedure in nutrition as well as in other phases of preschool practice.¹

There should be a regular rest period of fifteen minutes in the morning and a nap period of an hour and a half or more in the afternoon. The time duration can be only suggestive in the broadest sense, and it will differ with groups and individuals. Some children relax as they play. Others are active constantly. Some children tire more quickly than others. Some homes provide more opportunities for relaxation and sleep than others.

It will be noted that the afternoon session will be largely occupied with the routines of sleep and food. For this reason some parents may prefer to have their three- and even four-year-olds attend only the morning session. The program should be flexibly conducted to meet the needs of particular children and their parents. It should be clearly understood, however, that the health practices and the social development associated with the simple routines of eating and rest are of fundamental importance to the child's growth.

In the first interview with the parents of the entering child, the teacher gets the essential information about the toilet procedures of each individual child, his schedule, habits, and the terms he uses. Toileting is then arranged on an individual basis. As the days progress, regular toilet periods for small groups may be scheduled. The child continues free to go to the toilet when necessary and without asking permission. Facilities and

¹ Updegraff, Ruth, and Others. *Practice in Preschool Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938. p. 79.

supervision are provided. Children wash their hands and faces before each meal and after toileting and naps.

Play and work periods, with the content as indicated in Chapter I, are provided both indoors and out. Children experiment with clay, paints, and crayons. They use simple tools with wood. They build with blocks. They play and listen to the phonograph. They look at books and pictures. The teacher introduces them to stories and poems. They dance. They dramatize. They have explorations into the wonderland of nature and science. They make trips to local stores, near-by farms, and other places. Their speech and language power develop; they talk interestingly, for they have experiences to talk about and someone to listen. Should speech defects develop, the children have the advantage of skilled guidance that can assist parents as well as child through a difficult period. The children learn how to behave as participating members of a democratic group. They learn about persons and things. They experience the place of nature, science, books, music, and the crafts in the pattern of total living.

Personnel

The staff will include teachers, parent education and family life consultants, nursing, medical, mental hygiene, and nutrition consultants, and cooks. All of these will be present in the largest school systems. In the case of very small units it will be necessary perhaps for them to pool their resources on a township or county basis to supply such services. It is essential that all the staff members understand and like children.

Teachers who work with young children and their parents should be friendly and emotionally stable. Good health is a prerequisite. They should be informed concerning the growth, development, and guidance of children. Such teachers should know how to arrange an appropriate environment and to plan worthwhile experiences for young children. To have a sympathetic understanding of children; to be able to cooperate with

adults, parents, staff members, and community workers; to have an interest in community agencies serving children and families—all these qualities are needed.

The education of these teachers is of the utmost importance. They should be prepared to teach nursery, kindergarten, and perhaps primary children. Such preparation implies appropriate work at least equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Certification should be required for nursery school teaching as for other levels. The salary of such teachers should be the prevailing local salary for similar training and experience.

The parent's part in the program

It is important, particularly when a new entry is a three-year-old who has not previously been separated from his parents, that the mother come with the child to the center and stay with the child until he has had some opportunity to become acquainted with his new environment. The principal or teacher should advise with the mother in regard to this procedure in terms of the individual child. So far as possible, the mother or the father should continue to bring and call for the child in order to be kept fully informed in regard to his nursery school experience, to see him frequently in the school situation and to give the teacher any information regarding the child's experience at home. This interchange is particularly important in regard to the child's health and behavior and enables the teacher and the parents to work together for his growth and development.

In instances where either or both parents can conveniently visit the nursery school center and have a meal with the children, every effort should be made to have the parents feel free to do so. Where mothers (or fathers) can give time in helping at the center in such ways as making curtains, bibs, sheets, toys, painting or repairing equipment, the staff should make every effort to utilize such service since this is one way in which parents may enjoy sharing in the program.

Recording and evaluating

The teacher records and evaluates to be better informed concerning the development of the individual child and, therefore, to be more efficient in her program of guidance. Adequate records enable the teacher to render the parents more helpful consultative services. When cumulative recording is carried on, the teacher of the child today is helping all future teachers of the child, but, what is more important, the learning of the child has a better chance of being sequential. Just as cumulative records are proving a powerful influence in articulating the work of the elementary and secondary schools, so the cumulative records can assist in the integration of the nursery school, kindergarten, and primary grades.

Recordings and evaluations can be entered for both the individual and the group. "Jack shared the tricycle with his playmates today." "This group has been much interested in making a rock garden." Recordings can be formal entries on a printed blank or they can be quite informal jottings. Thus Frank's weight can be entered as of a certain day; and in a diary or log book, a note of Frank's response to the nap period may be made by the teacher. Some of her recordings will be only for her own eyes. Some she will want to share with the parents. Some she will enter on the cumulative record for the child's next teacher. Certainly the recordings concerning the groups will be discussed at staff meetings, and both the individual and group records will be relevant to the consultations with parents.

The matter of records and evaluation is one which every local nursery school needs to plan for and carry out in terms of its own values and needs. The facts and impressions which the staff members hold significant in terms of understanding child development are the ones to be carefully recorded. Generally the recordings will include the basic data of child accounting (on the entrance date of the child and periodically thereafter), important health and physical growth facts, observations of motor development, indices of mental development,

and descriptions of personal-social behavior. A short summary at the end of the year, the teacher's thumbnail analysis of each child, is often of great value for the continuing record.

Nursery schools and public education

Leadership in the establishment and maintenance of the nursery schools should be supplied by the leaders in the public schools. The nursery schools should become an integral part of public education.

The public schools are available. They are sufficiently near the homes. They have the buildings and many of the most essential facilities, equipment, and materials. Their personnel has professional standards of service. The public schools are for all the children of all the people. They are open to all regardless of race, religion, wealth, social position, national or cultural backgrounds. The public schools have already included among their objectives those of *self-realization*, *human relationship*, and *effective citizenship*.¹ These are objectives to whose attainment good nursery schools will contribute and objectives whose full acceptance must also entail acceptance of the program of nursery education.

The nursery school will profit from its inclusion in the public school program. Like nearly every other educational development in this country, it began as a private enterprise financed by private sources. As such it was open only to a highly favored group. The federal government in the depression supported nursery schools for the children of underprivileged homes; during the war nursery schools were opened to the children of mothers employed in war industries. The nursery school, however, cannot fulfill its democratic functions until it is extended to all young children. The nursery school needs to be imbued with the purposes and spirit of public education. It needs to be allied with the public school as well as with the home.

¹ Educational Policies Commission. *Purposes of Education in American Democracy*. Washington, D. C.: the Commission, 1938.

IV. FINANCIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR NURSERY SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS

There are many large administrative problems to consider before a local school system can extend its program to include the additional educational services of nursery schools and kindergartens. When need for these services has arisen in a particular community and has received general recognition, the particular services proposed should be tried out and proved by experiment. The parents, teachers, and other citizens should agree that the proposed services constitute a proper concern of public education.

Before these services can be established, the matters of financial and legislative support must be considered. The costs of the program have to be estimated and the moneys provided. Ample legal sanction must be obtained and legislative support must include the access to needed funds.

The cost

The cost of educational services for young children will depend on many local factors. Salaries of personnel, expenses of construction and maintenance, and other items show wide variance. If a community already is providing educational opportunities for four- and five-year-olds, its additional expense will be only that of providing for the three-year-olds. If the community has neglected to provide for the four- and five-year-olds, the cost of their education as well as that of the three-year-olds will have to be added to the budget.

The cost of nursery education per child will vary from community to community just as the cost per pupil of elementary or of secondary education varies. Experience has shown that the per capita cost of nursery education runs above that of the elementary grades, because the nursery education renders more services. On the other hand, the cost of nursery education per child has frequently proved less expensive than that of vocational education in the secondary school.

It is doubtful, too, whether most local districts will obtain much more than a 50 percent attendance for the first few years. The nursery schools will be *open to all the children*. Our experience, however, with kindergartens in public schools (dating from 1870 and especially from 1900) and our more recent experience with the WPA, Lanham Act, and other publicly supported nursery schools illustrate clearly that *voluntary* educational opportunities are not embraced all at once. Parents who are familiar with kindergartens and nursery schools are enthusiastic about them, but many parents are not acquainted with preschool education and have not, therefore, accepted it as a part of their thinking and practice. Even after they become acquainted with the nursery school and kindergarten—and acquaintance is usually tantamount to approval—parents and their educational counselors will consider such matters as the accessibility of the nursery schools, transportation facilities, and the adequacy of the home environment. The National Resources Planning Board¹ has estimated that we need to plan for about half of all children between the ages of three and five inclusive for preschool education.

Those communities that have been backward about developing educational programs for their young children should not expect a sudden 100 percent participation. Through the ordinary functioning of democratic processes, the program will grow gradually. Its acceptance will be won and not forced.

State financial support

The local community will need assistance from the state. To date thirty-two states have authorized the use of state school funds for the education of children under six years of age. In the pages directly to follow, the whole matter of legislative support will be considered. It is sufficient here to point out that purely local support has never been found adequate for any

¹ National Resources Planning Board. *National Resources Development Report for 1943. Part I. Postwar Plan and Program*. Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1943. p. 69.

level of education. The principle of state responsibility is well established in American tradition and practice.

"The State share in the support of public education increased from 30.3 per cent in 1939-40 to 31.5 per cent in 1941-42. The increasing role of the State in the support of education is significant."¹

State aid has resulted in better schools for children and youth. Educational opportunity within the borders of a single state has been extended. The children in poor counties have been given educational advantages which otherwise would have been restricted to the children in a relatively few wealthy areas. State aid to local schools has not been designed to legislate a sameness in education, but rather to guarantee a minimum or foundational program for all the children of the state. Even in states where the principle of state aid has been most thoroughly applied, there still exist wide differences in the amount and richness of educational offerings. These differences are perhaps as great as those in states where the state aid principle has been meagerly recognized. An adequate state aid program creates a floor, not a ceiling.

Importance of local initiative

The initiative or financial support of nursery schools must come from the neighborhood. It is the neighborhood and local community which must take the first steps, show the first interest, put forth the original effort, and put up the initial funds. The people in the local neighborhoods will also decide whether the financial structure of the education for young children shall be broad and strong enough to permit a minimum, acceptable program that can be open to all parents and their children. The best nursery schools will be those that originate among the people whom they serve.

¹Blose, David T. and Alves, Henry F. *Statistics of State School Systems, 1939-40 and 1941-42*, Vol. II, Chapter III. (U. S. Office of Education.) Washington, D. C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1944. p. 22.

General legislative status

It is not easy to review the legislative status of any educational matter throughout the United States because education is a function of the individual state. This means that there are forty-eight different pictures, plus a forty-ninth for the District of Columbia.

"Until the past few years school legislation affecting the education of children below the age of six has dealt chiefly with the conditions under which kindergartens may be established in the public schools. Wartime needs for nursery schools have caused some adjustments of this kindergarten legislation to include younger children. In a few instances legislation designed to meet wartime needs is of a temporary nature and will terminate at the close of the war. However, in several states the new legislation seems to be of a permanent nature, specifically authorizing or implying authorization for the organization and maintenance of nursery schools as a part of public school offerings."¹

Kindergartens will be considered here before nursery schools, because the former have received prior and greater recognition in legislation.

Statutory provision for kindergartens

Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have statutory provision to authorize the establishment of kindergartens. The other five states are: Arkansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Kindergartens have been construed as permissible under the general terms of the laws of four of these five. Kindergartens may not be legally permissible in Arkansas.

Only six states did not report any children as attending kindergartens in the school year 1941-42. The number in the forty-two states reporting plus the District of Columbia totaled

¹ Davis, Mary D., "The Listening Post," *Educational Leadership*, Vol. II. November 1944. p. 75.

over 625,000 and ranged from over 90,000 in New York to 62 in South Carolina.¹ The figures for 1944-1945 and 1945-1946 will be considerably larger.

*Entrance age to kindergartens*²

The entrance age to kindergarten is placed at:

3 years in	3 states
4 years in	23 states
4 $\frac{1}{4}$ years in	1 state
5 years in	6 states, and the District of Columbia which now has the "discretion of admit- ting children under 5"
less than 6 in	3 states
not more than 6 in	1 state

The remaining ten states do not specify the entrance age to kindergarten.

State school funds for kindergartens

Thirty-two or two-thirds of the states have authorized the use of state school funds for the support of kindergartens.

As has been noted there are forty-seven states where kindergartens may be operated, and in 1941-1942 kindergartens were maintained in forty-two. The public schools, in states other than the thirty-two which authorize state aid for kindergartens, must use local tax levies as their sole source of maintenance.

State legislation for nursery schools

The legislation for nursery schools does not present such an advanced stage of progress. Several states have enacted permissive legislation concerning nursery schools and a few have legalized the use of state funds for their support.

Florida by statute in 1939 permitted the public schools to establish nursery schools for children "between the ages of

¹ Blose, David T. and Alves, Henry F. *Op. Cit.*, p. 68-69.

² Data from a mimeographed release of the United States Office of Education. *Legal Provisions Affecting Extended School Services for Children in Wartime*, March 15, 1943.

three and five years, inclusive . . . where sufficient children of these ages are available to make possible an organization of at least twenty such children at any school center." Florida, however, decreed that the financial support of such nursery schools should come from county or local taxes supplemented by tuition charges, federal or other funds "exclusive of state sources."

Illinois in 1943 enacted a law enabling boards of education "to establish nursery schools for the instruction of children between the ages of two and six years, if, in their judgment, public interest requires them and sufficient funds obtained from local and federal sources other than local district taxes are available to pay the necessary expenses thereof."

The stumbling block to state legislation which effectively recognizes the nursery school as an integral part of public education has been the question of the use of state school funds for nursery schools. Several states have taken action to support child care services (which include nursery schools) as a war emergency measure. The following states are among those making appropriations for child care centers:

California	\$ 500,000
Connecticut	200,000
New York	2,500,000
Pennsylvania	187,000
Washington	500,000

Probably many states would be willing to have nursery schools continue in this postwar era provided they could be supported by local and federal funds. For example, the Wisconsin act of 1943 gives provision for the establishment and maintenance of nursery schools, but the last sentence reads, "The school district shall not be entitled to additional state aid for the operation and maintenance of a nursery school."

One of the best examples of appropriate legislation was the New Jersey law of 1944 which authorized any local board to "establish a nursery school . . . in any school under its control," and to "admit to such nursery school . . . any child who

is under the age at which children are admitted to other schools or classes in such district." The New Jersey law further declares:

"The expense of nursery schools or departments shall be paid out of any moneys available for the current expenses of the schools, and in the same manner and under the same restrictions as the expenses of other schools or departments are paid."

The Connecticut amendment of 1943 does not mention nursery schools as such, but mandates boards of education to provide "good public elementary and secondary schools *and such other educational activities as in their judgment will best serve the interests of the town.*" After an attempt at specific legislation, it was found that this general amendment would permit local boards of education to establish nursery schools. The general proposal, on the other hand, did not arouse the opposition which the term *nursery school* sometimes brings from people who are unacquainted with what it really connotes.

The war and legislation for early childhood education

That the war awakened the states to the need of more adequate provision for child care, protection and development has been pointed out previously. Because of war-created conditions the schools had to extend their programs. Fathers were enrolled in the armed services. Mothers were needed to take their places in the war industries and related civilian services. The schools were asked to help release mothers for this essential war employment. Schools were asked to provide before- and after-school programs for children of school age. Schools were asked to extend downward to include children of four, three, and even two years.

Were the schools "extendable"? "In many states school officials found themselves powerless under their state laws to deal effectively with these problems. There was confusion as to legal authority and scope of action. For example, there were no funds available to maintain extended school facilities for children before and after school hours, or to employ additional per-

sonnel for this purpose. In many states school officials were without authority to admit children to school before the regular school admission age. In some states school officials were uncertain as to whether they could accept federal funds to assist in the maintenance of extended school services deemed necessary."¹

The public schools and their state legislatures had to act with dispatch, and throughout the first three years of the war laws were enacted to authorize extended school services including nursery schools and the acceptance of federal and other funds for the financing of such programs. "It is significant to note that in 1943 more than half the state legislatures considered these problems and twenty states enacted provisions which in one way or another tended to alleviate the circumstances"; that is, to remove the obstacles to increased educational services, especially those for young children.

As a result today, thirty-nine states (thirty-one by express and eight by implied powers) have authority to receive and disburse federal funds for general educational purposes which include nursery schools and kindergartens. Forward looking action has resulted on the part of a few states in respect to kindergartens and nursery schools as an integral part of the permanent educational structure. On the other hand, it is equally true that a majority of the states are seemingly viewing the legislation relating to the nursery school as a war expedient to deal with the temporary conditions of an emergency rather than as a continuing part of American education.

Legislation needed to accelerate the establishment of nursery schools and kindergartens

Groups interested in the welfare and education of young children should work in their respective states to obtain legislation which requires local districts to maintain nursery schools

¹ *Education for Victory*. Biweekly of the United States Office of Education. September 15, 1943. p. 13.

and kindergartens for children of three through five when petitioned to do so by a specified number of citizens and parents. There are at least five states with such mandatory-on-petition laws for kindergartens at the present time.

Much more important is state legislation appropriating and authorizing the use of state funds in support of nursery schools and kindergartens. Experience has shown that states without mandatory legislation for the establishment of kindergartens, but with state funds to assist toward their maintenance, have produced more kindergartens than states with mandatory legislation but with no financial assistance for kindergartens. The lesson is clear: if parents and other citizens want their young children to have educational opportunities, they must provide a means of financial support. State aid must be provided as a definite part of such support.

State legislation should permit the acceptance of federal funds by the states themselves as grants-in-aid for the education of young children. As has been noted, nine states at present cannot receive and use such money because of statutory or constitutional limitations. The rights of the states must be fully protected by requiring that *all* federal funds for such educational purposes shall be channeled through and distributed by the appropriate state educational agency.

State legislation is needed to require suitable preparation and qualifications of those who teach in the nursery schools and kindergartens. The state law should provide also for state supervision and guidance.

It goes without saying that any legislative blocks to early childhood education should be removed, if they cannot be justified in terms of the best interests of children. For example, one state had a bill enacted into law which permitted a school board of any district containing a city of 25,000 population or more to maintain a kindergarten. This particular state had *only one* city of such size. Such legislation is a block to kindergartens, rather than a support.

Supervision

It has been noted that legislation should provide for general supervision and guidance of nursery school-kindergarten programs by the state education departments. It will be good administrative procedure for the various state education departments to designate a bureau or staff member as the responsible authority for the state supervision of these units. For example, the state education department in New York has designated the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education in the Division of Elementary Education to carry on the supervision of nursery schools and kindergartens; in Pennsylvania, the supervision has been entrusted to the adviser of elementary education; in Wisconsin, the supervision is assigned to one of the elementary school supervisors. Here again, because of the rather widespread establishment of child care centers (including nursery schools) during the war, many states have had to designate a specific person or office as responsible for their supervision.

Certification of teachers

Most of the states provide certificates for kindergarten or kindergarten-primary teachers presenting appropriate credentials or special preparation for work at this age level. Certification in other states in which kindergartens are authorized is provided under general elementary teaching certificates.

Eight states have made provision for the inclusion of certificates for nursery school teachers in their kindergarten or general elementary certification procedure. In a few states special provisions are made for the certification of nursery school teachers.

The qualifications for the teaching personnel engaged in the education of young children have been discussed elsewhere in this report. To obtain desirable teachers for the nursery schools and kindergartens, each state will need to set up the appropriate qualifications, general and specialized. Each state should provide opportunities for desirable individuals to receive this

appropriate preparation at publicly supported teacher educating institutions and encourage the provision of such opportunities at private colleges and universities. Finally each state department should have a certificating responsibility for recognizing professional preparation.

Registration of private nursery schools and kindergartens

Legislation is needed to require state registration of all private nursery schools, kindergartens, and elementary schools (other than those maintained by established religious groups). This registration should be a function of the state education department. One state has had such a law since 1939, and another large and populous state is considering such legislation at the present time.

Legislation as a result of growth and experience

When the legislative situation in the forty-eight states is reviewed, the picture is a varied pattern. It is not expected that all the states will quickly enact desirable legislation. Each state will proceed as befits its own needs and its own awareness of such needs. We have tried to indicate here merely some of the factors that should be taken into consideration as each state attacks the problems of early childhood education. The general solutions proposed have been those that experience has marked as most likely to insure suitable programs for our young children and their parents. The urgency of appropriate action may vary, of course, from state to state. The development of modern communication and transportation, however, is making the need of education reach about the same intensity level all over the country. What is done—or not done—in one state helps to determine the educational and cultural level of all the states. More important than the particular state in which we reside is the fact that we all are Americans.

V. PLANNING AND INTERPRETATION

The community and educational planning

Research has established the importance of the years before six for educational growth and development. Research has demonstrated that the young child is educable. Research and our experience attest the value of nursery school and the kindergarten and of correlative programs in parent education. The state can provide legal and financial support. The federal government can supply grants-in-aid. But it is the individual neighborhood, community, or other local unit which will determine whether or not its children and their parents will have appropriate and adequate educational services.

Public school administrators should not seek to impose extensions of school services where the need of them is not understood and where lay support is lacking. Yet it is equally true that the administrator has the responsibilities of leadership. It is his duty to be informed concerning the rapid and comprehensive changes in the social scene, the findings in psychology, education, and related fields, and the emerging needs in his own local situation. Certainly public school administrators and their boards of education can scarcely be accused of precipitate action in the matter of kindergartens. Kindergartens are now seventy-five years old in this country. Their worth has been shown by repeated studies and by the experiences of hundreds of school systems. Likewise their operation is not a difficult nor excessively expensive matter. Yet almost two-thirds of our cities do not offer kindergarten opportunities to their children. Public school administrators do need to direct the attention of their communities to desirable extensions in educational services.

The superintendent of schools and his board of education should enlist the community in the educational planning. Universities, state education departments, and our professional as-

sociations should provide materials¹ and personnel to assist the local superintendent and board in the organization of community educational planning.

Some of the questions which the superintendent and board of education will want the community to consider are:

What will the community be like in 1950?

For this kind of community, what kind of education is needed and for whom?

What are the outstanding deficiencies in the present program?

How can the community move from where it is to where it wants to be?²

There are many local agencies which are vitally interested in problems connected with educational welfare: such as the local Chamber of Commerce, service clubs, parent-teacher associations, community agencies in health and social welfare, labor organizations and women's groups. All these should have an opportunity to participate in educational planning. The public schools should in turn help to coordinate all the educational services for children which the entire community affords.

The community has responsibilities to serve all its citizens, and, through cooperative community planning, several needs for corresponding services for children, youth, and adults may be disclosed. Educational services for young children will be, however, a part of the total picture, and an essential part. Child accounting, play groups, nursery schools, kindergartens and parent education, should be considered and evaluated in the light of the total educational program. They should receive no special pleading. They can stand on their own merits.

There are nevertheless various stereotyped objections to educational services for young children and their parents which public school administrators may expect. Many of these stock objections are much the same as those used against any extension of public education. In fact, they were used in the early days

¹ New York State Education Department. *Problems Confronting Boards of Education—A Manual for Community Participation in Educational Planning*. Albany: the Department, 1944.

² *Ibid.*

against the efforts to teach children the barest rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Other objections are directed more specifically to the particular services proposed.

"I got along without nursery school and kindergartens. Why can't the children of today?"

The answer to such an inquiry can be best found by the questioner himself through a consideration of the changes which society has undergone. Many present adults got along as children without a myriad of things which we classify as necessities today: bathtubs, central heating, telephones, automobiles, hard roads, and so on. Only a few years back, we got along without airplanes, but American society would be hard put to survive without them today. In the eighteenth century our forefathers managed in their relatively primitive agricultural society to get along without vaccination, immunization, and other commonplace health measures. The American pioneer was not greatly handicapped if he was deficient in reading and writing. Our society now demands citizens with better health and greater educational powers than ever before.

"The worst home is better for the child than the best institution."

This has a familiar ring, but like many sayings it requires a bit of interpretation. Certainly one of the most basic needs of every child is love, and this need can be best supplied by mother and father. The nursery school and kindergarten have recognized the need of children for security and love in their home, and through parent education and consultative services they have helped many a child to this rightful heritage. The research in child development, carried on in connection with nursery schools and kindergartens, has emphasized the importance of the home, and has strengthened a growing tendency to favor the foster home over institutional care for orphans or children whose parents are unknown. The nursery school and kindergarten are simply agencies to help and supplement the

home. It is the home which elects to use their services, and the home can terminate such services at its pleasure. Parents who have opportunities to engage the help of nursery schools and kindergartens almost universally approve of them, and the actual reports of parents indicate that parent-child relationships are improved and have a larger common basis of understanding, sympathy, and affection. The nursery school and kindergarten are proposed because research and experience demonstrate that they will strengthen and support the best features of the American home.

"What can a child of three, four, or five actually learn? What is there that can't wait until he's six or seven?"

Matters of physical development, nutrition, and health do not wait until a child has reached six or seven. We have found out this fact, and we have created maternity aid, infant and child hygiene programs. We have established parent education programs and family consultation centers. These needs are not theoretical. They were present in the statistics of infant mortality. What is equally true, although not so readily understood, is that even if the child lives, poor health conditions and practices, and malnutrition in early years can mar his health throughout his life span.

The first six years lay the foundation for emotional and social development. The rejection of men for military service has been large because of inadequate vision, poor teeth, and other physical causes. Others have been excluded because of insufficient ability in reading and writing. But the largest number of rejects has resulted from nervous disorders and the medical men and psychologists in the armed forces inform us that these nervous disabilities are traceable in many instances to faulty training in early childhood. The defects in physical and mental health are present whether war occurs or not, but war has emphasized many of our shortcomings, and has indicated the need of increased educational services for young children.

As this bulletin has pointed out, children can and do make significant progress in science, esthetic expression, and language in the years before six. They are not only acquiring information and skills but they are likewise developing interests and attitudes.

Children are interested in machines, stars, rocks, animals, flowers, and trees. With their curiosity aroused, they explore and ask questions. To them, science is an intriguing wonderland. It is difficult for most adults to meet such questions. Responses of adults may be: "Don't bother me now; I'm busy." "Don't interrupt me when I'm reading." "You're too young to understand that." "Wait until you can read and find out for yourself." As some adults were handled this way by their parents, their spirit of inquiry may have been suppressed. When a child's curiosity is checked, when his questions are resisted or derided, his scientific approach may be effectually squelched. Parents and teachers need to provide opportunities for children to find out about the wonder world of science. Both adults and children must be ready to admit insufficient knowledge and error. In this way they feel themselves companions in the adventure of the search for truth. Attitudes must be based on knowledge and clear thinking.

With young children from three years old to five there is a natural joy in color, music, inventiveness, dramatic play, and construction. Unless an adult has blocked a child's expression in the creative arts through unwise criticism, a child of this age will delight in expressive opportunities. At five years he will enjoy also the intuitive work of other children. Children from three to five probably will ordinarily not get this rich experience with the symbolic arts in anything like the same degree except through school groups. To have fun with music the child needs other children of his own age as fellow members of the band or as companions in singing. Dramatic play is a group as well as an individual enterprise. Opportunities in the graphic and plastic arts are not found in the typical home.

The child needs a chance to enjoy the work of his peers and to have his work enjoyed.

The greatest part of language development takes place before the child is six or seven. Many of the most serious forms of speech defects such as stuttering, lisping, and shyness have their incipency before entrance into first grade. These defects are not easily cured. Children from foreign-speaking homes may be marked with an accent and other peculiarities to plague them throughout life.

What children can learn in the years before six if they are provided with adequate educational services is important and comprehensive. Such children so increase their physical, emotional, and intellectual endowment that we are having to recast our whole conception of the potentialities of good environment and adequate education.

"Aren't mothers better off if they stay home and take care of their children instead of visiting nursery schools or attending parent education meetings?"

This is a variation of the old theme that "Woman's place is in the home." It is an extension of the idea, for he who believes that mothers should not attend parent education sessions is apparently unwilling for mothers to leave their domicile even to learn how to be more efficient homemakers.

Again we need to be realistic. Some of us may want to return to the good old days when women did not vote nor work in industry and the professions, when women left the house only to go to church or market. Those days have gone, however, and women are co-partners of men in the community, professions, business and industry as well as in the home.

These same objections were made when the public schools and other agencies first provided adult classes in sewing, cooking, and the other arts of homemaking. We have come to understand that the arts of the homemaker are not inherited. They must be acquired. Once acquired, they contribute to more comfortable, more beautiful and happier living. The care, development, and protection of children are just as special-

ized. They represent the most important work that one can undertake. Anything that can be done to increase the efficiency of the parents in their guidance of children is just as important as that which increases the efficiency of the pediatricians and teachers.

"The nursery school and kindergarten will merely give mothers more time for bridge and the pictures."

The above charge obviously applies to a relatively few mothers. It does not apply to mothers working in industry or the professions. It does not apply to mothers of large families. It probably applies principally to a few mothers who can and will enroll their children in private nursery schools and kindergartens whether or not supplied by the public schools.

Those people who resent a mother's being partially free from a child for from three to five hours out of twenty-four are not generally themselves subject to any such responsibility nor do they weigh justly from first-hand experience the need for refreshment of the mothers.

The public nursery school and kindergarten will make things easier for the mother who sends her child there in the sense that she will be helped in the education of her three-, four-, or five-year-old just as any public school helps the mother in the education of the present school-age child. The mother who is acquainted with her responsibilities as a parent is not so likely to neglect her duties as one who has not learned of the manifold contributions she can and should make.

What we need for everyone—mothers, fathers, children, and all citizens—is a new conception of leisure-time activity. With the war at an end, with the advance of technology, and the expansion of social services, we shall all need to know how to work and play on the highest constructive and creative level.

"Educational services for young children will cost too much. We can't afford them."

This, after all, is the main argument against an extension of early childhood education. We may hem and haw about many

aspects. Some of us may be intensely concerned about this or that, but for most of us the question narrows down finally to the effect on the pocketbook. Nursery schools and kindergartens are going to add materially to our educational costs. Who is going to pay the bill?

It should be clear that you and I and everyone else are going to pay the bill, just as we pay for battleships, bombers, tanks, roads, cars, motion pictures, jails, asylums, hospitals, public libraries, museums, parks, tobacco, liquor, and all other things which make up the tangible aspects of American culture and which reflect its thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. We can be sure, however, that if we invest our money in the nurture and growth of children, we shall be investing wisely. Apart from questions of humaneness and democracy, dollars invested in the release and development of human resources are the most profitable economic investments we know.

As this discussion has pointed out, preschool education will cost more than education on the regular elementary level because it must be *more* specialized. More services are rendered. It will cost less than some vocational education on the secondary level. The question really is, in the light of what has happened to the world since 1914 and what will continue to happen unless some positive steps are taken, can we afford not to undertake it? Is the education of children to be a first or a last claim on our money? There is an increasing weight of public opinion to the effect that we must afford it, no matter what the cost. It is this opinion of young parents, civic leaders, and thoughtful Americans everywhere that has encouraged the proponents of early childhood education to move ahead.

Interpreting the program

Primarily, this extension of education should be thought of as a forward-looking program, a plan for healthier and happier children today, and a better world tomorrow.

The greatest help in interpreting the program will come from parents themselves. The interpretation should be based

on local efforts in parent education, cooperation, and responsibility. It should be remembered that the parent groups thus cooperating are usually composed of the younger, less static elements in the community, and the program for study and understanding should be based on procedures which are informed and modern in their appeal.

An interpretation of the program need not be set forth in obscure terms. It should be based on presentday knowledge of child development and the demands of our culture stated in a simple, attractive way. The advocate for more extended education for young children has a sound and honest case which may rest solely on its merits. The interpretation of that case should not be confused by nonessential issues.

In interpreting the program, various means are effective. Parents and other adults should make actual visits to the classrooms. The radio, the moving-picture film, and similar media are useful. Some of the methods of interpretation which have evolved out of the second World War may well be studied and adapted.

In brief, every community group should learn about the program in terms of its own background. To parents, stress should be placed on how a child grows and develops. To community health agencies, the mental and physical well-being of the community should be emphasized; to civic leaders, the values which will come from future alert citizens should be pointed out. The local schoolboard as the delegated body of the people themselves is the final determiner of school policy. These boards are composed of the best that is representative of our citizenry. They will need to understand that the education of young children is their job, and that such education in their community represents a paying investment. All these groups deserve a frank exposition of the cost of the program, else the school may be persuaded to embark on a "cheap" venture, which in itself may defeat the ends sought.

In the final analysis, the best interpretation will lie in the worth of the program itself. Every possible safeguard, educa-

tional and otherwise, must be built up around the program at its inception. If thought, care, and work are basic ingredients of the program, it will need little interpretation beyond that which naturally comes from happy, healthy children in a well-ordered community.

American culture, from its beginnings in the seventeenth century, has been among the foremost in provision for the welfare and education of children. In many aspects of public school services, America has pointed the way. We have already been outdistanced in early childhood education, however, by both Britain and Russia. These countries excel our efforts both in actual accomplishment and in their legislative plans for a postwar world. Will America continue to lag in its protection and development of the young child?

The Educational Policies Commission believes that the American people will fulfill their responsibility.

